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It is interesting to note the information given by Professor Kovalevsky, which exposes the group ownership of the Pshavs.[12] He relates that during his visit to the country he found an interesting combination of property rights of a nation, of the community, and of the separate family. For example, the forest was in common possession of the whole Pshav nation, the pasture ground was the property of communities which composed the nation, and the arable land was in the hands of each family, private or joint; and as there seldom was a division of the family, the property did not change hands but remained in the same family. Contrary to the Pshavs, division of the family was a general occurrence with the Khevsurs, and had as a consequence the division of property and the poverty of the people. At once, after his marriage, every Khevsur usually separates from his father and brothers and begins life for himself.[13] In contrast to this, the wealth of the Pshavs, who are not partisans of family division, was much greater than that of their neighbors. Among the Pshavs and Tushes were even such rich persons who possessed from 40,000 to 50,000 rubles, which they usually buried in the ground. As for the Khevsurs, they possess few cattle and are generally very poor.[14] Their property is very limited. A family is considered wealthy which owns as many as fourteen or fifteen cows, four or five oxen, two or three horses, and a mule. Their principal wealth is in arms, which are highly valued, and in copper vessels; money is very scarce.[15]

The government of the Georgian kingdom opposed the division of the family and favored its preservation, for it regarded the joint ownership of families as beneficial to the members of the families themselves as well as to the whole kingdom whose subjects they were. Thus, in the Georgian Code of King Vakhtang VI[16] we find passages encouraging the preservation of joint families and discouraging the partition and breaking up of family groups. The economic profit resulting from such organizations

[12] Kovalevsky: a, II, 84.
[13] Eristov: 111.
[14] Eristov: 124.
[15] Zisserman: 213.
[16] Vakhtang's Code.

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is manifest, even at the present time, in the rural life of eastern Georgia, where the primitive methods of tillage require five or six, or even more, pairs of oxen and many workmen. Instead of the joint family, which has now disappeared, economic groups are formed for the joint execution of field work, in which the prerogatives and duties of every participant are clearly defined.

As we mentioned in the beginning, group ownership among the Georgian Highlanders is manifested in the ownership of pasture ground, forests, and church property.

Pasture grounds are owned by every community jointly, and their boundaries are clearly defined and fixed. The Pshavs, who possess large flocks of sheep, amounting among wealthy men to as many as ten thousand head of animals,[17] hire the pasture ground from the Khevsurs and in other suitable places. Every member of the community in Pshavia,[18] had a right to use, after harvest, the arable land as pasture for his herds in the territory of the whole community. The pasture grounds of the Tushes represented a joint property of communities.[19]

The forests are situated in the territory of the people, as, for example, the forest on the banks of the River Alazani in Tushetia, called *otkhi thvali* (meaning "four eyes"). This forest was bought with the money of all Pshav communities, and represented the national property.[20] Upon the ownership of the forest depended the method of acquiring the arable land by the so-called *akho* (ownership by seizure), which allowed every member of the community to clear the land and cultivate it for his own benefit, without asking special permission from anybody for this action, and this portion of cleared land was regarded as his own property as long as he cultivated it. However, with the introduction of Russian rule in the Caucasus, a great portion of the forest was claimed for the Crown, and proclaimed as the property of the Imperial Government. The consequence of this was that it put an end to the ancient method of acquiring landed property by

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[17] Zisserman: 233.
[18] Machabeli: V, 386.
[19] Khakhanov: a, 43.
[20] *Ibid.*

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cakes from it. After this, facing the east, he kneels upon his right knee and with bread and brandy in his hands he prays to the deity of the hunt and the patron of game—the goddess *Dal,* asking her for help and success in the hunt. The Svans[9] represent her as a woman of great beauty who lives on the summits of the mountains.

After the prayer the hunter eats his bread, and if he is accompanied by a helper, he gives half the bread to him and they eat it with care and reverence, sacramentally. After this, the hunt begins.

If the Svan hunter succeeds in killing an animal, which he considers to be a special favor of the deity, he kindles a fire and skins the animal. He removes the inside parts of the animal, cleans them, and fixing the heart and liver on a wooden spit, fries them and brings them as a thank-offering to the deity.

After this the hunter and his assistant have their meal; then they divide the spoils. According to ancient custom, the head, neck and pelt belong to the hunter, and the rest is divided equally between them, with the assistant having the right of choice.

The hunter and his helper then return home late in the evening, secretly so that no one may see them and in order to escape the danger of someone's evil eye. The hunter and his helper both are joyfully welcomed in their families, where everyone gives thanks and praise to the deity of the hunt for their success. A clean pot with water from which no one has drunk is placed on the fire to boil the meat. When it is ready to eat, the family sits down to supper. The eating itself has a sacramental character and is accompanied by the precaution that not even the smallest piece of meat is dropped on the floor. The bones of the animal are carefully cleaned, put together and preserved. The horns are given as a thank-offering to the *Khati,* or are preserved at home.

We have given above a description of the individual hunt as practiced by the Svans, where the hunter goes alone or is accompanied only by his assistant, who takes no active part in the hunt itself. But there are other hunting expeditions in Svanetia

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[9] Margiani: 70-71.

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224 476 in which many hunters take part. In such cases, if only one of the hunters kills an animal, he gets the head, neck and pelt, while the remainder is divided equally among them all, with the assistant of the man who killed the animal having the right to choose his portion according to his own taste.

224 476 675 There is another interesting hunting custom among the Svans. When two hunters meet while hunting, if the meeting is spontaneous and not pre-arranged, they may enter into a mutual agreement with the Svan words, *sev esh'khvi,* meaning "one success." After this the fulfillment of the agreement is binding on both of them and has the character of a legal contract. They are thus obliged to divide the spoils of the hunt equally, even if it is killed by only one of them.

They hunt separately all day and meet again in the evening at the place agreed upon. The division of the spoil is not obligatory at the second meeting if the agreement was not concluded at the first, as established by custom, but the successful hunter may "treat" his partner with a portion of meat if he wishes to do so.

224 776 171 Besides the Svans, the other groups of Georgian Highlanders—the Khevsurs, Pshavs, and Tushes—believe in the existence of spirits and protectors of game and hunters. These spirits are called *angelozi.*

Similar beliefs are found among other groups in the Georgian nation as well as among other peoples in the Caucasus, such as the Abkhazes, Ossetes, Circassians, and others.

Thus the Georgians of Megrelia[10] believe in the existence of the "Queen of the Forest," called *Tgashi mapa,* and represented as a beautiful woman with long hair. She is regarded as the patroness of all wild animals, and on her good will depends the success of the hunter. The Abkhazians have a patron of all game called *Ajvepsha.*[11]

224 198 171 It should be noted that in addition to the belief in the existence of forest deities and spirits which protect wild animals, some of the people of the Caucasus possess also a secret hunting language.

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[10] Teptsov: b, 12.
[11] Zvanbai: Kavkaz, 81-2.

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This point is discussed by J. Potocki,[12] J. Reineggs,[13] J. Klaproth,[14] Lulie,[15] A. Dirr,[16] and others. The secret language of hunters, as used by the Abkhazians, was recorded by A. Dirr, and that of the Circassians has been recorded by all the other writers named above.

A contract of partnership among the Georgian Highlanders, similar to that described in the account of the hunting expeditions, is practiced also in their field work. In the eastern part of Georgia, partnerships are formed for the ploughing of fields, because the ploughing in that part of the country demands considerable expense and depends upon the nature of the ground and the construction of the plow itself, which is cumbersome and requires many hands and animals.

In the eastern part of Georgia the cultivation of land is very expensive. Thus, in order to operate a plow it is necessary to have eight ploughmen, ten pair of oxen, five or six workmen, and many other things. Therefore, only wealthy people are in position to accomplish this work without assistance. The people who are unable to do this because of their limited material resources, find a way out of the difficulty by forming a partnership for the execution of the work. One home supplies the plow-shred, called *sakveti,* and two pairs of oxen, called *kevari-khari.* Another supplies leather straps, another supplies the driver of the plow, the fourth is the ploughman himself, who also brings two oxen with him, etc. In such a manner a number of homes put together one plow, called in the Georgian, *guthani,* and they plough for everyone who takes part in the partnership, in turn.[17] In Khevsuria and Pshavia, where the land is cultivated with small, light plows, with only two oxen, it may happen that two men will be able to get the necessary things together: each furnishes an ox, and iron parts of the plow are bought jointly by both partners. The same manner of ploughing, as practiced in the eastern part of

[12] Klaproth: b, 381.
[13] Potocki: 168-69.
[14] Dirr.
[15] Lulje.
[16] Reinegga.
[17] Khakhanov: c, 192-95.

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Georgia, is found also in the district of Zakatali, where it is necessary for each plow to have not less than five pair of oxen.[18]

On the other hand, in the western part of Georgia, where the climate is mild and humid, such partnerships are not used in ploughing, because the plow itself is very light and requires no more than one man and one pair of oxen. However, the climatic and hydrographic conditions in western Georgia, as for example, in Megrelia, Guria and Imerethi, require the mutual assistance of the peasants in other lines of field work.

The cultivation of maize, which is the principal staple food in western Georgia, requires much labor and care. The main work consists in weeding out the over-growth from the fields, which is called *margloba* in the Georgian language, and *majirua* in the Megrelian. The abundance of rain and the rich, fertile soil of the country create the best conditions for the thriving over-growth. The ground soon after the ploughing usually is covered with weeds of all sorts, which grow so fast and thick that in a very short time they threaten to smother the new shoots of corn. In order to protect the crop until it is tall and strong, it is necessary to weed out the whole field from the over-growth at least three times every season; otherwise, the harvest will be lost. To accomplish this work without any assistance on the part of the villagers would be impossible for a single family, and failure to do this meant the loss of the harvest and consequently privation and endangering of the very existence of the family. The way out of this difficult position is found in the custom of mutual assistance and the reciprocal help in the cultivation of the land, which is known under the Georgian name of *nadoba*.

During the time of sowing or weeding out of the maize field, the Megrelian villager calls his neighbors for assistance and every one of them willingly goes to help him. The owner provides a good lunch and heavy supper, with plenty of wine. In the evening, when the day's work is over, they return from the field singing, and sit at the supper table for a long time, singing the national songs and making speeches until late in the night, so that in this

[18] Bakradze: b, 271.

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custom we have mutual assistance with the work, its accomplishment and plenty of "good time." It is interesting to watch a *nadoba* when a group of twenty men get together singing loudly.[19]

The custom of mutual assistance in the field work, the *nadoba*, by the Megrelians, is described also by the Italian missionary of the seventeenth century, Archangelo Lamberti,[20] who lived among the Megrelians for many years. "The land is ploughed and sowed with such calculation," writes Lamberti, "that the harvesting should be finished on the day of Saints Peter and Paul, the principal holiday in Megrelia. Because of the dampness, the weeds grow in abundance, and plenty of work is necessary to clear the ground of them. As this task requires promptness, the separate families would not be able to accomplish it with their own force, and therefore they invite their neighbors to assist them. The villagers who begin the weeding out of the fields invite those neighbors whose fields are not yet ready for the same work, and they are assisted in turn in the accomplishment of the same work when their fields are ready."

There is mutual assistance in Megrelia also in husking the maize. The people assemble at the home where the work is to be done, and after a day's work in the field, the host prepares a big supper, at which all the people who take part in the work have a good time, singing and dancing until late at night.

The forming of partnerships in field work exists not only among the Georgians, as has been described, but also among the other peoples of the Caucasus, such as the Ossetes[21] and others. The partnership for the execution of field work is called *goi*[22] by the Avars; by the Laks of Daghestan mutual assistance in the field work is called *marsha*.[23] The Kumiks of the Terek district practiced mutual assistance in harvesting corn, which they call *bulka*.

Reciprocal assistance and co-operation as described above are evident not only in the field and home work, and not only in one

[19] Borozdin: 7.
[20] Lamberti: 57.
[21] Kovalevsky:
[22] Lvov: 13-14.
[23] Omarov: 916.

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476 part of the country, but among all groups of the Georgian nation, by Highlanders and Lowlanders alike, in every manner of life, in customs connected with child-birth as well as in wedding ceremonies and funerals.

As we saw in describing the customs connected with child-birth among the Khevsurs, the woman lives in separation during the time of bearing the child. She bears the child in a specially constructed hut called *kokhi,* and all the women of the village who are in separation at that time help her to construct the hut. After the child's birth, she goes to live in the *samrevlo,* with the women in a state of menstruation. Each *samrevlo* belongs to a certain number of families, and is constructed by their mutual efforts. In different ceremonies which are prescribed by custom, during child-birth as well afterward, the relatives and neighbors take an active interest in the welfare of the mother and child, protecting them from the possible attack of evil spirits, and presenting gifts to the new-born child, etc.

During marriage ceremonies, all the relatives of the young couple take an active interest in their welfare. The relatives of the bridegroom are busy supplying him with the resources necessary to help him meet the expenses of the wedding ceremony. During the wedding celebrations, the official presentation of gifts takes place, when the names of the donors and the gifts given by them are announced before all who are assembled. This is done with the aim of reciprocal repayment in a similar case by the receiving party to the giver, so that on this occasion we have likewise reciprocal assistance—the give-and-take.

764 The custom of mutual assistance is especially manifested in
476 meeting the expenses of funeral ceremonies. Funeral ceremonies in Georgia are very complicated and require large expenses. With a few exceptions of rich people, to perform all the required procedure would be the ruin of the majority of the people, were it not for the help of kinsmen and neighbors, so that in this case also we have reciprocal assistance expressed in the give and take. Help is rendered with things of nature, such as corn, wine, etc., or with money. The name of the donor and the kind of gift presented by him are recorded on a special list. Usually, at the

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entrance door of the home of the dead man is placed a table, where a man, with a few assistants, writes down the names of the visitors and their gifts. I have observed many such occurrences in Megrelia. Everyone, with the exception of children, must register his name and give something. This is done so as to assure the donor of similar assistance if his home should be stricken with the same calamity. Everyone helping another in such a case is sure to be helped himself on a similar occasion. In the Georgian province of Guria in times past the villagers brought to the families stricken with death,—flour, cheese, wine, beans, and in more recent times, with the stabilization of monetary system in Georgia, money was given, which consisted of from ten to thirty kopeks given by neighbors, and from one to ten rubles by relatives. Here also, as in Megrelia, the names and gifts are recorded on a special list. The monetary offering is called in Guria *tsasaburavi*, meaning "covering," or "for covering." On the other hand, the help with things of nature, as mentioned, is called *shesatseri*, meaning "offering."[24] The custom of reciprocal help in such cases is regarded by the Georgians of Guria as obligatory, and if anyone, for example in the district of Lanchkuti, did not fulfill this requirement, he was regarded with distrust by everyone.[25] In the same way as among the Georgians of Guria and Megrelia, the custom of mutual assistance is practiced by other groups of the Georgian nation. Among the Georgians of Ratcha, for example, the family of the deceased is given an offering called *shesatseravi*, consisting of from twenty pounds to two puds of corn for bread, or from twenty-seven to forty-five loaves of baked bread. Others bring wine, beans, etc. The relatives help with money, everyone giving from forty kopeks to two rubles. This monetary help is called *sapeni*. The name of the donor and the gift are recorded, as among the Georgians of Guria and Megrelia.

Among the Khevsurs, during the annual commemoration of the dead, all relatives of the deceased come together, even from the outlying villages, and everyone brings a quantity of brandy, consisting of two or three *thungi*, the equivalent of from ten to

[24] Mamaladze: 83.
[25] Keresclidze: 236.

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fifteen bottles.[26] Among the Svans, for the commemoration ceremonies for the dead, the relatives of the deceased person bring, from every home, thirty small loaves of bread, called *lekhde*. These loaves are for consumption during the feast;[27] or the Svans,[28] before the commemoration celebration, visit all the relatives and collect the necessary supplies for the feast.

From the examples given in this chapter, we notice that in every group and community is found a clearly marked group solidarity expressed in reciprocal assistance and co-operation. We see that this phenomenon is evident not only in the field and home work, but is manifested by all groups of the Georgian nation —by Highlanders and Lowlanders alike, in every manner of life, in the customs connected with childbirth as well as in wedding ceremonies and funerals, and in time of danger everyone finds protection and refuge among his kinsmen. The last mentioned fact is clearly illustrated in the customs of blood-feud, where every offender is supported by his relatives; on the other hand, kinsmen of the victim seek redress and punishment of the culprit. In conclusion, we may admit that the social life of the communities among the Georgian Highlanders is based on a complex of customs, clearly defined and enforced by the group, co-ordinating and regulating the social and individual life of the people, creating between the members interdependence and symmetry of action, reciprocity with security, where every assistance is accordingly returned and repaid.

[see cat. III p. 112 ff. -- Analyst]

[26] Radde: d, 87.
[27] Eristov: b, 41.
[28] Stoinav: 439.

C. G. 596 children; later, married sons with adult offspring would separate from the family even if the father was still alive. The final stage was that each married couple set up a household of its own. The original joint family survived until recently in some remote corners, particularly among the Svan and the Pshav. There C. G. 476 is a tradition of mutual aid between families with regard to tasks exceeding the forces of a single unit (agricultural tasks, vintage, house-building, tapestry-weaving, etc.). These relations obtain even between unrelated families, C. G. 621 but often whole villages or sections of villages consisted of groups of related families (clans). Such family-settlements exist at the present time; a kolkhoz or a brigade in a kolkhoz may consist entirely of persons bearing the same family name.

C. A. 608 In the whole N. Caucasus and also in Armenia the institution of milk-relationship existed. A child suckled by a woman belonging to a certain family became related to that family, as did all its relatives, and these ties were considered as sacred as those of blood relationship. In the N. Caucasus such a relationship could also be established ritually in the case of older persons, namely by mere contact with a woman's breast; this was carried so far that even a forcible performing of this ritual could end a blood feud, as the act made the injured family and that from which "blood was sought" related "by milk." In this